

CALIFORNIA JOURNAL OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

NOVEMBER, 1958



CALIFORNIA JOURNAL OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

VOLUME XXVII

NOVEMBER, 1958

NUMBER 2

The California Journal of Elementary Education is published quarterly in August, November, February, and May by the California State Department of Education. It is distributed without charge to school officials in California primarily concerned with the administration and supervision of elementary education and to institutions engaged in the training of teachers for the elementary school. To others the subscription price is \$1.00 a year; the price for single copies is 30 cents. Subscriptions should be sent to the Bureau of Textbooks and Publications.

Entered as second-class matter September 13, 1932, at the Post Office at Sacramento, California, under the Act of August 24, 1912.



EDITORIAL BOARD

ROY E. SIMPSON, Superintendent of Public Instruction

JAY DAVIS CONNER, Associate Superintendent, and Chief, Division of Instruction

HELEN HEFFERNAN, Chief, Bureau of Elementary Education

IVAN R. WATERMAN, Chief, Bureau of Textbooks and Publications



CONTENTS

GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION	Page
Editorial Comment and News Notes.....	65
Facing the Problem of Grouping for Instruction.....	71
The Problems and the Possibilities.....	73
Teaching the Skills.....	82
A Note for Better Learning.....	92
Social Studies Groups Based on Interests.....	94
Solving Problems of Class Management.....	98
Sociometric Grouping.....	102
Using Differences to Advantage.....	105
Grouping is a Sometime Thing.....	112
The Administrator Looks at Grouping.....	116
Ideas About Grouping.....	123
So What Do We Do Now?.....	126
Selected References on Grouping.....	127

EDITORIAL COMMENT AND NEWS NOTES

PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION

The question of grouping for effective instruction is one which continues to concern teachers, supervisors, and school administrators. In a school district that enrolls a sufficient number of pupils to make more than one group necessary, the primary purpose in grouping is to secure social units or groups that can work and live together in ways designed to achieve the objectives of the school. After such social units are organized, the teacher has innumerable problems of grouping for instruction in terms of the native endowment and interests of the children and the wide range of experiences the school provides.

During the summer of 1957, Helen Heffernan, Chief, Bureau of Elementary Education, California State Department of Education, discussed the possibility of developing an issue of the *California Journal of Elementary Education* on the subject of "Grouping" with Fred Wilhelms, Chairman, Education Division, San Francisco State College, and other members of the college staff. The suggestion was enthusiastically accepted and subsequent meetings were planned to discuss the problem and plan the issue.

Appreciation is expressed to the following members of the faculty of the Education Division, San Francisco State College, and teachers at Frederic Burk Laboratory School of San Francisco State College, who participated in the planning and prepared the articles for this issue of the *Journal*:

Esther Anson, Associate Professor of Education and Vice-Principal,
Frederic Burk Laboratory School
Violet Ban, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Alice Breslow, Associate Professor of Education
Robin Briscoe, Teacher, Frederic Burk School

Ray Carney, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Lawrence Carrillo, Jr., Assistant Professor of Education
Irvin Futter, Professor of Education and Principal, Frederic Burk School
Eva Gildea, Assistant Professor of Education
Jane Glucksman, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Katherine Koop, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Marie Louise Lofgren, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Roger McGowan, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Louis Pottenger, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Charles H. Rhinehart, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
John Robinson, Associate Professor of Education
Hilda Taba, Professor of Education
Margaret Weymouth, Teacher, Frederic Burk School
Fred Wilhelms, Professor of Education and Chairman of the Education Division
Herbert Wilson, Assistant Professor of Education

In making the study, members of the San Francisco State College faculty discussed the problem of grouping with teachers and supervisors and collected from them illustrative materials that are used in the articles. The following persons were especially helpful in this phase of the study:

Eugene Benson, Hoover School, Redwood City
Eleanor Crouch, Co-ordinator, Carmel Unified School District
Mary Durkin, Curriculum Consultant, Office of the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools
John Lofgren, Valley Mar School, Sharp Park
Gladys E. Monroe, Kimball School, Castro Valley
Marjorie Roberts, Colonial Acres School, San Lorenzo
Ima Seifer, Dayton School, San Lorenzo
Terrence White, Principal, John Muir School, Martinez

The faculty has greatly appreciated the work of the office staff at Frederic Burk School for the typing and correspondence handled so efficiently in carrying this project to completion.

The pictures on the cover were taken by Orville Goldner, Director of the Audio-Visual Center, San Francisco State College, and are used with the permission of the Wadsworth Publishing Company of San Francisco.

THE ANTI-LITTER STORY

Telling the Anti-Litter Story in the Home, School, and Community through the Use of Classroom Bulletin Boards is an educational service publication available from Standard Oil Company of California free of charge.

The purpose of the booklet is to provide help for classroom teachers interested in developing better student attitudes toward the litter problem. Specific attention is given to (1) suggestions for the development of attitudes; (2) review of the process of creating bulletin boards; (3) teacher background material on the litter problem; (4) examples of bulletin boards on litter for all grade levels.

The suggestions for pupil anti-litter activities in home, school, and community are practical and interesting. Student government councils could use this publication as a basic resource for planning anti-litter programs and campaigns.

On the inside back cover of *Telling the Anti-Litter Story* is a catalogue of other free school materials, including study prints, specimens, models, filmstrips, motion pictures, and publications available from Standard Oil Company of California, Public Relations Department, 225 Bush Street, San Francisco 20, California.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Handbook on Parent Education. Revised by Milton Babitz, Consultant in Adult Education, Bureau of Adult Education, California State Department of Education. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, May, 1958. Pp. viii+56.

This illustrated handbook presents a philosophy upon which the parent education program can be based and contains information regarding the many avenues of co-operation that are being used in working toward the goals established for the parent-education program.

Sections are devoted to Developing a Healthy Personality—A Common Goal for Parents and Children; Organizing a Community Pro-

gram of Parent Education; Parent Education in California Today; Group Processes that Help Parents Learn; and Parent Education in Public School Classes for Adults—Regulations and Policies.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools, to principals of all secondary schools, and to selected organizations interested in the subject. Additional copies needed for use in public schools will be furnished without charge on request from superintendents of schools. The purchase price is 25 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

A Process for Early Identification of Emotionally Disturbed Children. Prepared by Eli M. Bower, Education Research Project Co-ordinator, Emotionally Disturbed Children, Bureau of Special Education, California State Department of Education. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, August, 1958. Pp. viii+112.

This bulletin is a report on a research project in which state and local agencies co-operated to establish practical methods for the early recognition of emotional disturbances in children. Teachers, school administrators, and professional persons in the field of mental health will find this bulletin useful in formulating conclusions regarding methods of identification of the emotionally disturbed child, and in formulating procedures for using such information for the rejection or verification of hypotheses about children's behavior.

Chapters deal with assumptions and difficulties in early identification of emotionally disturbed children; analysis and contributions of past research studies; purposes and methods of the study; comparison of the characteristics of identified emotionally disturbed children with other children in classes; calculating adjustment indexes for children; and implications for teachers.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools, to principals of elementary schools, and to selected organizations and individuals. The price is 50 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

Evaluating the Elementary School. Prepared by Bernard J. Lonsdale and Afton Dill Nance, Consultants, Bureau of Elementary Education, California State Department of Edu-

cation. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXVII, No. 8, August, 1958. Pp. x+70.

This bulletin is planned to help administrators, supervisors, teachers, parents, and other community leaders evaluate the elementary school. Sections deal with the elementary school in American society, the goals of the elementary school, and helping children to maintain and improve their physical fitness, maintain and improve their mental health, understand the world in which they live, acquire skills essential for democratic living, express themselves creatively, and grow in self-control and self-direction. Concluding sections deal with the co-operation of home, school, and the community. Photographs of children in California schools illustrate the bulletin.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools and to principals of elementary schools. The price is 35 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

The Psychologist in the School: A Report of a Workshop for School Psychologists Held at San Francisco State College, Summer, 1956. Compiled by Eli M. Bower, Education Research Project Co-ordinator, Emotionally Disturbed Children, Bureau of Special Education, California State Department of Education. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXVII, No. 9, August, 1958. Pp. viii+44.

The articles in this bulletin were derived from presentations made at a workshop for school psychologists held at San Francisco State College, June 25 through August 4, 1956. Important considerations regarding the changing role of the school psychologist are pointed out in these articles.

Chapters deal with administrative dilemmas and organizational leads in the development of psychological services; assessment and evaluation of delinquent behavior; assessment and treatment of children with brain injury; educational problems and psychological assessment of deaf children; problems in referral of children and adults to psychiatrists and mental health clinics; mental health consultation in a school setting; and evaluating educational experiences for the promotion of mental health.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools, and to selected organizations and individuals. The price is 50 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

Diagnostic Problems in Mental Retardation: A Report of a Workshop at Long Beach and San Francisco State Colleges, June 17-30, 1957. Compiled by Eli M. Bower, Education Research Project Co-ordinator, Emotionally Disturbed Children, Bureau of Special Education, California State Department of Education; and Jerome H. Rothstein, Associate Professor of Education, San Francisco State College. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXVII, No. 7, August, 1958. Pp. viii+64.

The articles in this bulletin were prepared by specialists who are qualified to offer certain of the services needed in the identification of mentally retarded children. Chapter headings are as follows: Differential Diagnosis of Mental Retardation; The Private Pediatrician's Approach to the Problems of Mental Retardation; The Contribution of the Psychologist to the Diagnostic Team; The School Psychologist's Role in Diagnosis; Factors in the Appraisal of Intelligence; Research on Pseudo-mental Retardation; Cultural Values and Psychological Diagnosis of Mental Retardation; The Mental Health Problems of Families with Retarded Children; and Interdisciplinary Teamwork.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools, and to selected organizations and individuals. The price is 35 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

FACING THE PROBLEM OF GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION

We who are putting together this issue of the *Journal* are practical school people. We come to this tough problem of grouping—as we suspect you come to it—with deep concern, no pat answers, and a great urge to find better solutions.

Naturally we have hunted through the literature on the subject. It *proves* very little. But it has helped us toward a valuable historical perspective by telling us of efforts to solve problems through various sorts of grouping. We have tried to convey this perspective to you.

Mostly we have had to depend upon our own considered ideas and experience, and so we have concentrated chiefly on describing approaches and techniques of grouping that are in effective operation.

We start from a profound conviction that grouping is necessary, not just a "necessary evil." We believe it can contribute enormously to the effectiveness of teaching and greatly extend the opportunity of every boy and girl to develop. But we also see that bad grouping can do great and lasting damage.

How to catch the gains and at the same time steer clear of the dangers is the question. To do both, grouping must meet at least the following four basic tests:

Test 1. Efficiency of Instruction. Grouping should produce situations that result in improved learning in reading, arithmetic, or for any other phase of school work that is done in the groups. In brief, grouping should increase productivity per man-hour of teaching and learning.

Test 2. Freedom from Damage. Grouping should cause no child to be sacrificed. Grouping should leave no child stretched out of shape, robbed of self-respect, conceited, lackadaisical, belittled, or condemned by himself and his fellows.

Test 3. Optimal Growth of Individuals. Grouping should make it easier to bring each child to full flower in subject-matter learning and in personal development simultaneously. He should be more of an individual because of the grouping. He should have richer and more varied opportunities to meet his personal needs, to explore his personal interests, try out his special abilities, and to play many kinds of roles in a pleasant social climate.

Test 4. Learning for Citizenship. Grouping in itself should provide good learning experiences. Participation in the groups formed should provide children with experiences that help them to understand and accept themselves and others, develop skills of managing relations with others, learn both the techniques and attitudes of leadership and co-operation, and to become increasingly better citizens of a society that depends upon democratic participation.

THE PROBLEMS AND THE POSSIBILITIES

Any school with more than one "teacherful" of pupils has to find the most sensible ways it can of dividing the pupils among the teachers available. That is one focal point of the grouping question. Then each teacher hunts for the most effective ways of organizing the group assigned to him so that all members of his group will attain the desired goals. That is the second point of focus.

The search for ways of grouping effectively has been going on for about a century. In the simpler days of the one-room school, not even the graded system, which we take for granted, had been developed. It is commonly thought that the old phrase "in the fourth reader" meant the same as being in the fourth grade, but that was not wholly true. In the old, ungraded room with children of all ages, the teacher "placed" each child where he seemed to fit best, for reading, for arithmetic, and for everything else. Whatever else might have been wrong with the system, it did not lack flexibility. Within the limits of the teacher's time, it permitted treating each child as an individual. Today some highly advanced school systems are experimenting once more with ungraded rooms, usually covering a span of two to four years.

In 1848 the Quincy Grammar School of Boston set up the first organization of graded rooms in which we of today would feel at home. By 1860 nearly all cities used the system. And by 1870 they were already in trouble with it! For they had gone, almost overnight, from great flexibility to almost complete rigidity.

The basic idea of the new graded system was to keep together children who could handle similar subject matter, with virtually no attention to any other factor. It was the first big try for "homogeneity." A child was not to be promoted until

he had mastered the content of the grade he was in, or he could skip a grade if it appeared that he could handle the subjects he would be required to take. The result was a tremendous amount of retardation, along with some acceleration. It was common for 30 or 40 per cent to repeat the first grade, and in a typical school 20 per cent of all the pupils were repeating last year's work. Many pupils were retarded as much as three years.

The system failed completely. In human terms it led to a mix-up: big, lubberly lads teamed up with little ones, girls whose chief concern was dates paired off with girls whose main interest was dolls. The attempt to get homogeneity had resulted in greater heterogeneity.

Even in subject-matter achievement, the system did not produce the expected leveling of abilities. By and large, "repeaters" did not "master" the grade they repeated. It was proved that they did not learn as much in the second year as they would have if they had been promoted. Furthermore, it was shown that excessive retardation had disastrous effects on pupils' morale. Dropout rates became incredibly high. Probably no educational "solution" has ever been more completely discredited. By 1910 excessive retardation was close to a national scandal, and school systems were scrambling to achieve a "normal" age-grade distribution as a proof of their goodness. Today's critics of annual promotion, who still believe it is silly to promote a child out of a grade for which he has not yet mastered the material, might profit from studying the history of requiring pupils to master certain subjects at each grade level.

It is generally assumed that age is the best single criterion for forming roomsful of grade school children into classes. The sophisticated teacher knows that the really distinguishing characteristic of his fourth grade group is that the pupils in it are about nine or ten years of age. In terms of grade norms, he expects them to have a range of at least half a dozen years in their abilities in reading, arithmetic, and other academic subjects. He knows they will likely range from very low to near genius in general academic aptitude or in any special ability.

Yet in a mild way age grouping is part of the search for homogeneity. Given the enormous variability of humankind, age grouping will bring together a roomful of children more like each other than will grouping by any other measure. Still, even in such a room the ranges of variation will be so extensive that we must keep searching for ways within the age group to serve each child best.

One line of effort to provide instruction when a wide range of ability existed within a group resulted in the development of plans for individual instruction. Individual instruction rose to its height in the so-called "laboratory plans," such as the famous one of Winnetka, Illinois. Unfortunately, the plans were generally pretty mechanical. They individualized little except rate of progress and that not very much. The children generally continued to do about a year's work per year in each subject. The individualization did not involve digging into and meeting personal needs, interests, and abilities. And so, in a general way, the plans withered away. Recently, a new attempt is being made to use individualized instruction in the teaching of reading.

World War I sounded a new note for the schools. The Army's classification tests created a startled awareness of individual differences and set off a wave of testing and measuring. "I.Q." and "M.A." grabbed the spotlight. Here at last was a foolproof way of classifying children!

Ability grouping was probably a natural outgrowth. In 1919 Detroit gave the first large tryout to the new idea: stick to basic age-grouping, but divide each age group into three ability levels. Quickly thereafter, A, B, C, and X, Y, Z groupings and a host of variants sprang up across the nation. Controversy raged. Literature poured forth. The scientific movement in education was rising to crescendo, and there were measurements a-plenty of subject-matter learning.

By and large, the results obtained by grouping pupils according to ability were disappointing. A school might still go on with the plan, because it made life more pleasant for the

teachers (the lucky ones, anyway) or because an administrator liked the neatness of the categories. But the anticipated striking gains, especially for the able group, simply did not materialize. Research results varied. One study would show some advantage for ability grouping, the next some disadvantage. If any group gained at all consistently, it was the lowest section. But the main fact was that the differences never amounted to much.

Maybe the trouble was that there was too little differentiation of content and method at the three levels. The general tendency was to teach about the same things in the same way. Anyway, the result which amateurs always anticipate that the abler pupils would zoom up like a rocket if they were freed from their duller peers just didn't happen.

In the meantime other developments were coming in to affect educators' thoughts and feelings about ability grouping. From the start many had been against it, temperamentally and intuitively, because they just did not like the idea of classifying young human beings on the basis of one or two arbitrary measures. As time went on the accuracy and validity of the measures themselves came under skeptical review. Among the sophisticated, the I.Q. was no longer the one big, unquestioned index. Increasingly, educators saw that the so-called "homogeneity" of homogeneous grouping was largely a will-of-the-wisp, that total variability within each subgroup remained almost as great as it was in the unselected mass before grouping—one count said 83 per cent as great when three levels were used. More and more educators came to face the unescapable fact: There is no one way to divide human beings by ability. There cannot be a "homogeneous group." No matter what you do, you must still be prepared to teach so as to meet vast ranges of abilities, interests, and needs.

Anyway, as teachers acquired new sensitivity to children as persons, they were less exclusively interested in the intellectual-academic side. The school began concerning itself more with the well-rounded development of each young person. More variables, more kinds of ability, not all measured on intelligence

or academic-achievement scales, became important. A new emphasis developed on a warm, accepting, group climate, and a broader conception of the needs of each child. With it came a new appreciation of the values of diversity for some purposes and less urge to seek homogeneity even if it could be achieved. And so enthusiasm waned for the ability-grouping "solution," though many continued to use it. Ability grouping, based on rather crude measures and centered mainly on subject matter, was withering away.

Then came a tremendous upsurge of concern for the highly able pupil. It had been rising all through the '50's. Much of the criticism of "progressive education" centered on complaints that geniuses were wasted, the able student was not pushed and "stretched" enough. Sputnik fear magnified the concern. It created a kind of absolute impatience that made the thoughtful reservations of trained educators seem like mere academic quibbling. Many schoolmen felt that they "simply had to do something" about the gifted. Once more segregation of the able group seemed the magic solution to much of the public and to some members of the profession. Once more the old assumption took hold: If only the abler children were freed from the sticky masses they would rise to untold heights. Thus a form of ability grouping bade fair to gain new impetus in the schools.

Still, the prospects were that any new attempt at grouping would not be the same as the old. For, in the intervening years, new ideas and new techniques had been developing, which held new hope. But before we go on to those, let us review what we have been saying and what it means.

Some way of assembling children into effective working groups has seemed essential. Children differ tremendously in a host of ways—in maturity, in general ability, in many special abilities, in interests, and in needs. We recognize this better today than ever before but in a general way school people have always known it. And always it has been seen that teaching to the great range of diversity creates problems.

So far, so good. But now we see with growing clarity that when we have tried to solve those problems, we have fallen into the following traps:

1. It has been assumed that by classifying children according to some one variable we could secure a "homogeneous" group. But careful studies show that the resulting groups are nearly as heterogeneous as the total group.
2. Any system of classifying children rigidly and permanently holds great risks of doing serious damage to individuals.
3. Homogeneity would not always be most desirable anyway even if it could be achieved. For many purposes heterogeneity is necessary and should be welcomed.

The way has been opened to think in new terms, to search for ways to secure flexibility and fluidity in grouping, to think of pupils as persons rather than by levels, to plan for putting things together in different ways for different purposes.

Schoolmen are rightly concerned regarding the best ways of forming a roomful of children. But they are now freer than ever before to think in human terms. They use indices of ability and of achievement along with subjective judgments. Since they are free of the compulsive passion for a false homogeneity, they can look at needs and interests and personal traits and appraise each.

But mostly the mental energy has been turned toward solving the problem in the classroom by using better ways or organizing the class after it was formed. Here, too, measures of ability and of achievement continue to be used, but with reference to specific areas. Something close to ability grouping might be used, for instance, in reading and arithmetic, but these were two different types of groupings and the children involved might not be the same.

Many groupings, on the other hand, have little if anything to do with general levels of ability. The working committees that tackled various jobs in the comprehensive social studies

units were formed on entirely different bases. The unifying element might be some special interest or curiosity. A generally slow child might be needed by his peers for some special flair in art or mechanics or a group of children might work together simply because they like each other.

Suddenly there is room for many more kinds of "goodness" besides the academic-intellectual kind which would always be of great value. There is room for many roles—leading, following, planning, executing. Many roads lead to authentic success. Many ways are available to identify special needs and interests and abilities. No child needs to be at the bottom of the heap everywhere, and no child is so universally good that he can be always at the top.

It looks as if the road is open to teach effectively to great ranges of ability and need. No child needs to be damaged in the process. In fact, each child's potential can be better identified and developed, each can learn how to live with himself and his fellows, and each can become an increasingly good citizen.

But let us be cautious, rather than glowing. For we have arrived now at the point at which we are having hunches, inspired hunches perhaps, but a tremendous amount of learning lies ahead of us to make these hunches realities. Great practical difficulties confront us, and our abilities to handle them are still in their infancy.

Today it is not enough to kill only two birds with one stone. If we took each important learning separately, the school year or even a lifetime would not be long enough to learn all we need to know in order to live effectively.

We should take a close look at some of the many factors with which educators deal. First, the teacher must help each child to develop his individual potentialities. Secondly, the teacher must constantly keep in mind the importance of helping the child to become an effective member of a society committed to democratic principles and ideals. Thirdly, under present conditions of mass education, the teacher must fulfill these responsibilities with groups of 20 to 40 children. The

responsibilities mentioned may be outlined in some detail as follows:

Individual Development

- To provide challenge
- To increase specific learning of skills and information
- To increase the degree and depth of participation
- To develop good work habits
- To improve evaluation
- To develop and broaden interests
- To allow for choice
- To provide success experiences
- To allow closer pupil-teacher relationships
- To develop creativeness
- To increase motivation
- To develop a sense of self-acceptance and appreciation and the capacity to accept others

Social Development

- To reproduce life situations where people of various skills and abilities work together
- To develop democratic behaviors and attitudes
- To teach the democratic processes
- To learn to work and co-operate with others
- To understand the "whys" of behavior
- To feel and enjoy satisfactions in group membership
- To learn to deal with problem solving techniques and develop critical thinking
- To share interests and ideas
- To broaden and deepen concepts through interaction
- To develop healthy peer relations
- To learn alternative or better ways of behaving toward other people

Classroom Management

- To provide for flexibility
- To help establish routines

- To organize in ways to reduce range when that seems desirable
- To facilitate co-operative and effective planning
- To facilitate growth in self-direction and self-control
- To provide a wide variety of experiences and materials
- To share the responsibility and planning of care for the room and materials

Faced with such a complex situation, teachers are striving to select and arrange experiences that help children move toward a number of learnings or goals simultaneously. Using a variety of appropriate methods of grouping will help teachers to do this job efficiently and successfully.

TEACHING THE SKILLS

The teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic continue to be emphasized. Certain generalizations apply to achievement in all of these skills. Two of these generalizations follow:

1. Individuals within the class will vary widely in interest and abilities. Furthermore, wide variations are desirable.
2. Each of the skills must be developed step-by-step—that is, each of these involves a complex process that must be built one step at a time, each step being predicated on the previous step.

The problem is one of determining how to teach these skills to individuals each differing from the other and to do the teaching in a large classroom group. How can this be done?

Educators have developed a number of methods of dealing with the problems involved in teaching heterogeneous groups. These methods are identified by the following statements:

1. Special individual or group instruction or both and the use of special laboratories and clinics
2. A variety and range of instructional materials or a variety and range of teaching methods and experiences, or both
3. Variations of expectations, standards, and responsibilities for different children
4. The use of individual choice periods in which children select from among specified activities and materials
5. Building similar backgrounds in readiness for the lesson
6. The placing of pupils according to achievement level for a portion of the day without regard to age or years in school
7. Grouping on a single-factor basis
8. Individualized teaching

9. Cluster grouping where a "cluster" of children achieving alike in some skill are inserted into an otherwise heterogeneous class
10. Subgroupings within the heterogeneous class

The following discussion shows how each of the methods may be used in helping children to learn basic skills. Only one of the skills is used to illustrate a method. Any of the other skills might have been used equally well.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION

Schools frequently provide special instruction for severely retarded readers. During the school day, the remedial teacher works with small groups (usually 10 or fewer). These may be the low-groups from each classroom or may be groups composed of pupils selected from several grades on the basis of their reading achievement level or difficulty in reading.

In some school districts where there is particular concern with reading development, a number of children are being helped by special instruction to achieve nearer their potential, primarily because the small groups make it possible for the teacher to get closer to the individual and his problems. Other districts that have tried providing special instruction have given it up for various reasons. The expense of such instruction is comparatively high, for an additional teacher is required. Problems of scheduling the special instruction must be worked out cooperatively by the remedial teacher and regular classroom teacher so that the children receiving special help will not miss more than a minimum of regular classroom work. In some districts special instruction is provided for the academically gifted.

A VARIETY AND RANGE OF METHODS, MATERIALS, AND EXPERIENCE

Children cannot be expected to be equally good in the language arts or arithmetic. The following two-group lesson plan in spelling for a third grade provides to some extent for both variation in expectations and variation in methods.

A. Spelling Group I

1. Complete lesson of 14 words and 4 review words
2. Follow daily study plan:
 - a. Monday—Write words from the spelling list to take home and for writing lesson, enter in dictionary being constructed, alphabetize.
 - b. Tuesday—Fill in blanks in workbook.
 - c. Wednesday—Trial test; study words missed.
 - d. Thursday—Use words in original sentences of story.
 - e. Friday—Take final test.

B. Spelling Group II¹

1. Partial lesson of 7 or more words and 4 review words
2. Follow daily study plan:
 - a. Monday—Write words from the spelling list to take home, put in dictionary being constructed, study with teacher; write words in air, discuss similarities of words in lesson with known words, discuss words that are spelled like they sound and those needing to be memorized.
 - b. Tuesday—Fill in blanks with any necessary help from teacher; study.
 - c. Wednesday—Take trial test; study words missed.
 - d. Thursday—Study words missed on Wednesday; if none missed, alphabetize list; use words in sentences with teacher's help.
 - e. Friday—Take final test.

Though some of the methods indicated in this illustration may be open to question, in using them the teacher is taking several steps toward adapting to the variation in spelling ability he finds in the third grade.

¹ In this plan, the pupil takes more words as he is able. Many pupils are able to take all the words by the middle of the year. Each child has an incentive to increase his list of words to that of the more capable pupils. Each child evaluates his progress in terms of his own achievement rather than that of a set standard.

INDIVIDUAL CHOICE PERIODS

In the teaching of reading, library periods or free reading periods are commonly provided. These may cover the entire time allotment or may be for a portion of this period after the other work is completed. The following plan for grouping a fifth grade includes a library day, free reading after completion of work, and a "variety" day when several reading activities are possible.

Group I includes 20 children who are reading on the fifth grade level; Group II includes 8 children who are reading on fourth grade level; and one child (Frank) is a reading disability case on the second grade level.

The formal reading period is 55 minutes in length. No workbooks are used by the children in the intermediate reading levels. The assignments for each day are written on the chalkboard and discussed with the pupils.

The teacher's plan may be similar to the one that follows:

	MONDAY	
<i>Group I</i>	<i>Group II</i>	<i>Frank</i>
Provide motivation for pupil to read the story to be read. Have pupils read the story silently.	Have silent and then oral reading of the story assigned to the reader.	Have him work in workbook about 20 minutes; then read the assignment in the reader silently and then orally. Introduce new words and give the next assignment.
Provide dittoed worksheets for pupils to complete.	Distribute worksheets such as dictionary work, alphabetizing, homonyms.	
These worksheets may include comprehension questions, matching words with definitions, syllabication, and the like.		
Have pupils correct and discuss worksheets.		
TUESDAY		
Library day for all reading groups. The pupils in each group select their books and then spend the remaining time reading. Wide reading is encouraged.		

WEDNESDAY

Group I

Have the pupils read orally story (or poems) in their readers.

Assign dictionary or encyclopedia work.

Provide time for free reading.

Group II

Provide motivation for pupils to read the story from the reader and have pupils read the selections silently.

Have pupils complete worksheet which includes comprehension type questions.

Have pupils correct and discuss worksheets last ten minutes of period.

Frank

Have him work in workbook correlated with reader, then read the assignment in the reader silently, then orally.

Provide word drill.

Motivate pupil so as to arouse interest in the next day's assignment.

Group I

Motivate pupils so they will be eager to read the story assigned.

Write on the chalkboard or ditto exercises for the pupils to complete.

THURSDAY

Group II

Have pupils read the story silently.

Have the pupil read orally and discuss parts of the story.

Provide time for free reading.

Frank

Have workbook assignment completed.

Have assignment in reader read silently and then orally.

FRIDAY

Entire class may read and discuss the *Weekly Reader* or pupils may read materials of their choice from library books or supplementary readers. Sometimes the time is devoted to dramatization, choral reading, and making drawings to illustrate a story of the pupils' choice.

READINESS FOR THE LESSON AS A FACTOR IN GROUPING

The teacher of reading in the elementary grades knows the necessity for building readiness for the particular lesson in the basal reader. The readiness needed for both the content and the vocabulary of the story is outlined in the teacher's guide for the book and in most instances detailed procedures are given for developing the readiness. The girls and boys may be encouraged to recall their experiences or to review other stories. New words included in the lesson may be presented in a meaningful context. Also included are familiar words in a meaning

not familiar to pupils. After the background of readiness is established, some approach for the required motivation is usually suggested, such as "The children in our story today are playing a game, just as you do. But during the game which the story tells about, one of the boys does something that almost stops the game. Let's read to find out what he does."

Any readiness activity for the lesson which tends to develop a common background for the particular story or task can be a way of helping to remove some of the individual differences which might prevent the pupils from working together as a group. Filmstrips, films, study prints, discussions, phonetic or structural analysis of board work on words with common elements, or reading of poems or selections by the teacher may be used. Sometimes a parent or other adult may be invited to tell the class about his experiences. The only limits on the activities that may exist are determined by the teacher.

HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING FOR ONE AREA OF INSTRUCTION

In homogeneous grouping for one area of instruction, pupils who achieve similarly on a test or in their classroom work in one area such as reading are placed together for instruction in that area during a portion of the day without regard for the pupils' ages or grade placement. This approach has received considerable publicity, and parents and pupils, especially superior pupils, have reacted favorably. However, differences within the groups are still present. This fact is pointed out by McCullough as follows:

. . . the teacher may have fewer reader levels to consider, but may have as great a variety of skills in need of remediation or development. Of course, too, the better the teacher, the greater the differences become. Students apparently alike in achievement level at the beginning of the term become more and more disparate as the course proceeds.²

² Constance M. McCullough, "What Does Research Reveal About Practices in Teaching Reading?" *The English Journal*, XLVI (November, 1957).

HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING FOR ALL AREAS OF INSTRUCTION

In the use of homogeneous grouping for all areas of instruction, pupils of the same achievement level (or intelligence level or some other factor) remain together throughout the school day. The problem here is that although the pupils in a group may be similar in one way, they will differ in all others. If they are similar in reading, they will vary in reading skills at that level, they will differ in intelligence, in arithmetic and other abilities. Homogeneous grouping in reading is impossible to accomplish; all efforts to achieve homogeneity have merely produced collections of individual differences.

And when pupils are grouped according to achievement level some teacher must work with the "low-low" group. This teacher must look forward to a rather discouraging year, a year in which he must work harder than ever to provide the "spark" that the group lacks and accept an outcome that is somewhat less than might have been accomplished under different circumstances.

INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING

Individualized teaching apparently provides the answer to the problem of meeting individual differences—teach each pupil separately and differently. Basically this is a guidance method which requires the teacher to have knowledge of each pupil's need and to give continuous attention to each pupil's record of progress. There is, however, a lack of careful research establishing the effectiveness of this method. Certain school people believe that this method holds the answer to many problems. Although the supply of teachers who are equipped to present 30 or 40 different programs of instruction for a single subject is certainly very limited, it is possible to find examples of apparently successful teaching of the skills through a completely individualized approach. The teacher who made the following statement is apparently one of those who enjoys success in using individualized instruction.

All pupils in the group are allowed to progress as rapidly as they can maintain the skills for each grade level.

This program has three major facets:

1. The pupils may work together in groups for the teaching-learning session with others at the same level of achievement and who have the same needs at the time.
2. New concepts can be presented to the entire group at one time.
3. The pupils attain confidence, security, and self-satisfaction through being "a part of" and not "apart from" the group.
4. The pupils do the written assignments individually at their own rate.

In one school, each pupil is given a folder in which to keep his written work, tests, or other materials that show his progress in arithmetic. A chart in which the various assignments are presented, similar to the following, is stapled inside the folder.

Concept Learned	Practice Pages				Test
	189	190	191	192	
Long Division 3 place number by 2 place number					—

Page numbers for practice and tests are printed in boxes. Each box is colored when the pupil has done the requested work. All papers can be kept in the folder. The colored areas show the work completed and make apparent the progress made. The pupil's work can be examined and the areas of work that have been done well and those areas of work that need improvement determined.

This plan for teaching arithmetic individualizes the program of work and allows each pupil to work at his own rate. Results on tests indicate a comparatively high rate of growth and level of understanding as compared with the national norms.

CLUSTER GROUPING FOR READING

Cluster grouping is a way of dealing with individual differences in which heterogeneity in the classroom is encouraged as

being important to maintain, although it may be the cause of difficulties in providing instruction. To use this form of grouping the school must have at least two rooms at each grade level. The pupils assigned to each room will have the usual range of ability, but within each room there will be a group or a "cluster" of pupils who achieve in reading at about the same level. The teacher may therefore direct her efforts in the teaching of reading so as to provide the greatest possible help for the pupils in the cluster.

The use of cluster grouping, however, is subject to the same limitations as are other groups organized to secure homogeneity. Although the pupils in the "cluster" may have similar ability and achievement in reading, it is quite likely that they differ considerably in other areas of the curriculum, in behaviors, and even in the reading skills.

SUBGROUPINGS WITHIN THE HETEROGENEOUS CLASSROOM

The organization of small groups within the classroom for instruction in reading has been well accepted by teachers throughout the country. Such groupings may take any of the following forms:

1. Ability or achievement grouping. Several (two, three, or four) groups are formed according to their reading achievement level, with a shifting of pupils from group to group as their achievement changes.
2. Need grouping. Pupils are grouped according to their need for instruction in some phase of school work, as determined either by the teacher or the learner.
3. Practice or tutorial grouping. Numerous or small groups are formed to add to the amount of direct help and actual practice, such as
 - a. Pairing of children to practice oral reading or working together on some aspect of the skill. (Buzz grouping or team grouping)
 - b. Forming small groups to play word games

- c. Providing for tutorial grouping in which one student who knows a technique helps another or others who do not know the technique
- 4. Interest grouping
 - a. Providing for pupils to share ideas based on similar recreational reading interests
 - b. Providing for dramatizing, telling stories, writing stories, setting up exhibits or displays
- 5. Research grouping
 - a. Groups are formed for committee work with reference books.
 - b. Pupils who are curious about the same things look up information and work through the problem together.

The types of grouping described may be used in all areas of the curriculum. The classroom teacher will obviously utilize various forms of grouping as he finds they can be used to advantage in securing high levels of instruction and learning. He will know, however, that in using them that he is not eliminating heterogeneity but merely controlling certain of its conditions to the point that instruction and learning reach a higher point of efficiency.

A NOTE FOR BETTER LEARNING

The individuals in a classroom group frequently require special attention and help. The teacher must meet these requirements in ways that permit him to make the most economical use of his time.

One way of meeting the requirements is to write short notes on the children's papers to let the children know how well they have done the required work. Since children appreciate honest and tactful frankness, the notes should be brief, to the point, convey constructive ideas, and be positive in nature. Some examples of the types of short notes that may be used for these purposes follow:

Jim: This paper shows good research.

Well expressed, Mary.

Skip: See me and I'll help you with punctuation. You have a good start on an exciting story.

Cele: I'm surely glad you are getting your work finished. Now try for greater accuracy too.

Hill: You know Tom is doing some special work with fractions. How about getting together with him?

Carol: I'm pretty sure you can do better but am not sure that I know what help you need, but I would like to try helping you.

Lloyd: Fine paper.

Longer notes also have their place and purpose. Such notes can deal with specific topics or problems and include directions for action on the part of the child. Some examples of the types of longer notes that can be used to advantage follow:

Steven: You have shown excellent progress. Why don't you get one of your earlier papers out of the file and take it and this one home and show your parents how you have improved?

Jean: Several of the other girls are interested in dogs too. Do you suppose that you and Stephanie would like to start a magazine with these stories? I'd be glad to help you duplicate your work. Please check with me for a conference time if you are interested.

Bill: This is better than last week's work. Let me help you with division. Bring this paper with you and we can go on from here.

Susan: I know you like to have your papers look perfect, but remember there are different kinds of work and assignments. Sometimes it is the thinking that counts and at other times nice writing is important too. Don't be discouraged when you make mistakes.

Tim: Our class needs a weather station, as you know, and this work looks to me as if you are all set to build one. How about getting two or three people to help you and let me know what materials you need?

Using a variety of techniques of keeping children informed regarding their progress and being absolutely sincere in using the techniques are important aids in building the children's feeling of success. Besides notes, diagrams, drawings and symbols can sometimes be used to advantage in marking children's papers providing the children understand them.

An added dividend in marking papers in understandable ways is frequently secured because the parents see the marks and the message written on the paper and as a consequence encourage their child toward further self-improvement. In this way, the parent-child-teacher relationship strengthens the child.

Sometimes children show their interest by returning their papers with a responsive note to the teacher. Direct individualized written communication can help each child stretch his ability to the maximum. In part, this help involves keeping the child informed regarding his achievement. Our educational system is based upon the importance of every individual, the survival of self for creative work through self-knowledge.

Notes from the teacher to a child regarding his progress can help foster the child's self confidence and encourage him to participate in group work of the sort that most effectively uses the wide range of differences within the classroom.

SOCIAL STUDIES GROUPS BASED ON INTERESTS

Teachers frequently ask questions such as, "What part does interest play in setting up groups? When is it wise to allow children to do what interests them? How can we capitalize on children's interests?"

The term "interest" is frequently used in referring to factors that may be used as a basis for establishing working groups. For example, in referring to a pupil's interest in social studies any or all of the following may be involved:

1. Interest in a topic or a content area such as "Why have people in our country moved westward at different times in our history?"
2. Interest in an activity or a medium such as construction, research reading, map making, block play, or ceramic representation
3. Interest in friendship or relationship with a person, such as the child who chooses a group so he can be with his best friend or because it is his only chance to work with a status leader in the group
4. Interest in a position or role in the group such as the desire to be alone or in a small group or conversely to be with a larger group of popular children, to be a leader or a follower

Obviously, no one of these interests nor all of them provide an adequate basis for grouping pupils for the social studies; however, they provide one basis for the grouping. The basis used will depend upon the purposes to be achieved.

The following examples show how certain teachers utilize pupils' interest to advantage in grouping pupils for instruction in social studies.

INTEREST GROUPING IN A STUDY OF THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT

As the study of the Westward Movement gained momentum in our fifth grade class, a number of the children displayed genuine interest in the lives of persons whose roles in the movement were colorful and dramatic. Children who differed greatly in levels of achievement and maturity found themselves wanting to work together to learn more about the pioneers of the Westward Movement. In meeting for the first time as a group they decided to prepare and present a puppet show. They also decided how to go about their chosen task.

Their first step was to do a little research. They needed to know more about the lives of the people around whom the show would be built. They selected books and pictures from which to get information. With the help of the teacher, they were able to get additional material from filmstrips and films. The better readers were helpful by showing others how to find information. Many times the members of the group would read to each other. Each member seemed to be getting a common core of information.

As the reservoir of information grew, the time arrived for the script to be written. When the script was finished, the coaching and rehearsing began.

Using the information they had gathered, the entire group began in earnest to make the puppets. When their favorite characters had been created from clay and papier-mâché, they set to work providing the puppets with the proper attire. When the scenes were drawn and painted, the children joined in presenting a successful puppet show.

The following are some of the valuable experiences and understandings gained from this activity:

Children of several academic levels co-operated within a group.

Children worked together toward a common goal.

Each child had opportunity to do what he knew best and was able to help others.

Opportunities for leadership were afforded as they worked on a team.

Learning was purposeful.

Each child's needs and capacities were recognized.

Each child had a chance to contribute and succeed.

INTEREST GROUPING IN AN AVIATION UNIT

We began by collecting aviation materials of all kinds to be stored in readiness for creating a stimulating environment. As the material was accumulated the children shared their findings with the rest of the class. Through this sharing the children became increasingly aware of how much more they could accomplish through working as a group than as individuals.

When enough materials were gathered, the children grouped themselves informally to set up the environment. In choosing their co-workers the children seemed to base their decisions or answers to these questions. Is my choice a good worker? Does he show interest in the project? Does he have the necessary skills? The children tested themselves in different groups shifting around until they had the best possible working conditions.

One group began by making model airplanes. A boy with experience offered to help a boy who had a plane kit. One excellent reader pored over plans and gave instructions for building a plane to a weak reader, who was better than he in the construction of balsa planes. Making kites seemed to stimulate the interest of the girls. Some who could use a saw made kite sticks, others glued the kite frames together, papered, and decorated the kites. Others turned to making gliders. The children contributed to each other's success, and successful flights gave status to the proud builders.

An understanding of the human sacrifice involved in progress developed as the entire class began writing creative stories and making reports about famous men and events in aviation. Reports were made on the following topics: Man Dreams of Flying; Imitating Birds and Using the Air; Balloons; Gliders; Engine-powered Craft; Jets and Rockets; Missiles; Satellites

and the Future. The wide range of differences within the class provided a stimulating range of opinions concerning the various contributions to aviation. From summaries of the individual reports made by several committees an aviation time-line almost magically appeared.

What else could now enter the unit but the drone of model airplane engines? With this came questions from all sides. How does an engine run? What makes a plane fly? What are lift, thrust, drag, and gravity? What are the parts of a plane? Why does a balloon rise? Answering these questions became a group project. Girls constructed hot air balloons, set up appropriate experiments, and watched as boys broke in engines, practiced glider flights, sanded, painted, talked, and argued.

The first flight of one pupil flier, a relatively slow reader, lasted a few seconds and ended in a crash. From this arose the nickname "Orville" and a feverish activity on the part of all to become the first successful flier. A few weeks later three two-minute flights and landings were made by the flier whose first flight ended in a crash. This flight helped him to achieve status.

Individual differences were used to great advantage in making murals, writing a play, comparing the costs of air, water, and land transportation. A girl who could not express herself effectively in writing was able to arrange an oral interview and through it to make arrangements for a visit to an airport.

Efficient use of individual abilities and skills and the encouragement to improve are enhanced by heterogeneous grouping. It provides an atmosphere where failure is not only tolerated, but sympathetically cushioned. Children depend on one another. Success depends on the efforts of many. The individual is given adequate opportunities to succeed and this is important, for success is essential to motivate learning. And important, too, children learn to accept and value differences.

SOLVING PROBLEMS OF CLASS MANAGEMENT

The loss of time and energy between group activities is a "worrisome thing, one which leads teachers to sing the blues . . ." One problem facing both the new and the experienced teacher is how to organize his class for effective teaching and learning. One facet of this many-sided problem is learning to make useful the fleeting minutes between group activities.

When a group purpose has been met or a task completed, elementary school pupils are inclined to become somewhat free-wheeling, for the control which came from the purpose no longer exists. What was a smoothly running group is likely to lose cohesion and break up into restless or bored individuals without satisfactory control.

In reading, for example, the wide spread of differences in the ability and achievement of pupils may be such that pupils should be divided into no fewer than three groups and each group then given the instruction its members need. The management problem then becomes one of planning so that while the teacher is helping one of the groups the other groups are fruitfully occupied.

One possible way of organizing for this purpose involves so-called dovetailing. Dovetailing is the simultaneous use of a number of activities planned and selected to provide growth in children and effective use of time that might otherwise be wasted. One fourth grade teacher describes the use of dovetailing activities as follows:

I have found it valuable to plan generally with the children on the kind of activities in which they may participate when their group activity has ceased to function. Certain children are sufficiently self-directed to grasp an available block of time to catch up on unfinished work or go to the library table whenever time is available for a little

extra reading. These youngsters take care of themselves satisfactorily during the in-between times. Dovetailing is organized for children who are not sufficiently self-controlled or self-directed.

Certain children need *active* activities. They need activities which they can start and finish in any extra time available. Weaving is an excellent dovetailing activity. When once started, it can be picked up and worked at during short blocks of time. Making a papier-mâché animal is another good example. Another coat of pasty paper can be applied in ten minutes if the supplies are prepared and accessible. Making puppets or assembling model kits are other possibilities. The activities are usually related to the social studies theme but they need not be.

It is important that a child finish the academic work for which he is responsible, but it is also important that he be able to turn to other tasks when his work is completed.

Without planning for the free time between group work, a classroom can become chaotic. A classroom should be organized in such a manner that the children are encouraged to make choices. There should be many kinds of activities. The planning should provide for a wide range of abilities. Dovetailing choices should be planned to include all children.

A teacher of a fifth and sixth grade class described another way of having good class management in a group in which the range of individual differences is wide.

He reports that working toward an improved student government provided many opportunities for teaching the academic subjects as well as giving each pupil a chance to contribute according to his ability toward the success of the class project. He believes that working on the problem of student government is a practical and realistic way of teaching and understanding the meaning of good citizenship. His words were as follows:

Our approach to better class management was the developing of a class handbook for an improved student government. This project was an outgrowth of a discussion in the early part of the year concerning the meaning of "securing an adequate education." The conviction developed that an "adequate education" meant more than attaining certain academic skills. It meant also that it should provide the tools to effect better human relations.

Each member of the class suggested a specific area in which he believed that certain behavior was necessary and in which citizenship standards should be maintained. The pupils grouped themselves or worked individually to develop the standards for the area of their interest. They chose to use the word "standards" because "laws" implied punishment, whereas "standards" implied an ideal or goal to be attained. As the "standards" were developed by the individual groups, they were presented to the class for consideration, improvement, and acceptance. The standards adopted by the class for the cafeteria may be used as an illustration.

Standards of Conduct in the Cafeteria

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Talk softly | 6. Respect others |
| 2. Put chairs away when finished | 7. Eat politely |
| 3. Do not run in the lunchroom | 8. Use good health rules |
| 4. Keep tables clean | 9. Wash hands before eating |
| 5. Pick up papers | |

As the work on standards neared completion, it became apparent to the class that certain standing committees were necessary to support the work of the many groups. The five committees were selected by the class which generally seemed to be representative of the many areas for which standards were developed. One of the committees was a Citizenship Committee. Part of the work of the citizenship committee was to develop goals for a good citizen. The following goals were developed on the basis of ideas presented to the committee by the entire class.

Goals of a Good Citizen

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. To be honest | 6. To respect property |
| 2. To follow directions | 7. To be courteous |
| 3. To be reliable | 8. To obey standards |
| 4. To respect others | 9. To be respectful |
| 5. To be neat | 10. To set a good example |

The class motto selected was "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." *Matthew, 7:12.*

The class also adopted a preamble to its statement of standards for good citizenship as follows: We, the students of Room 12, Hoover School, in order to form a more perfect class, insure a better education for common knowledge, promote the general welfare and rights of

others, and secure happiness throughout Hoover School, do ordain and establish these standards of citizenship conduct for Room 12.

Signed (class members)

The other standing committees operated in a similar fashion. They tried to involve the entire class in their activities by using the suggestions of all members of the class and involving them in the work of the committees in as many ways as possible. All members of the class had a feeling of belonging.

Class management through student government provides a good opportunity for each pupil to become acquainted with others. It leads to an awareness of responsibilities as citizens. It provides the teacher opportunity to emphasize self discipline, class rapport, to provide an enriched type of program, and to provide for the participation of all pupils in the group process. It is one more way of utilizing individual differences as a basis for providing meaningful learning situations for boys and girls.

SOCIOMETRIC GROUPING

Sociometry has been defined as a means of presenting simply and graphically the structure of relations existing at a given time among members of a given group. The major lines of communication or the patterns of attraction and rejection in its full scope are made readily comprehensible at a glance.¹ The results of a sociometric study can be computed by a sociogram, a social-distance scale, a sociograph, and other techniques.

Teachers and administrators have used sociometric techniques for many different purposes. Sociometrics have been used to determine desirable seating arrangements, committee organization for the social studies, club and recreational activities, and group assignments for special projects, and as a means of analyzing class composition. The following reports by school administrators and classroom teachers show ways in which they have made use of sociometric techniques.

Sociometric choices were used as the basis for assigning seventh and eighth grade pupils to classes. Each pupil was asked before school was out in June to name three people with whom he would like to be in next year's class. He was then asked to name anyone with whom he would not like to be. The pupil was told that he would be with at least one of his three choices if at all possible.

Classes were organized around the selected leaders. It was often necessary to place several leaders and their supporters in one class. The supporters for the leaders were pupils who indicated mutual choices with the leader.

The leaders and their followers formed the nucleus of the class around whom those with few rejections were placed. The highly rejected were placed with their first choices if they had not been rejected by that choice. They were placed in the group where they would meet the least hostility.

¹ Helen Jennings, *Sociometry in Group Relations*. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1948.

Often small groups had formed to further a common interest or for protection; these groups were left together.

This kind of grouping for class composition has been used in the district for three years. Each year the new classes have sociometrically reorganized. The procedure has not been fully evaluated. However, the teachers and other staff members believe the learning process is sufficiently improved to make the system desirable.

After taking over a second-grade class at mid-term, I found myself in a rigid and highly-structured classroom with me as the center of authority. I identified two basic problems that needed work to improve the classroom atmosphere:

1. The pupils showed a highly competitive spirit in the classroom and on the playground. This spirit tended to encourage tattling and unco-operative behavior.
2. There was a need to shift control from external authority to control from within.

I gave a sociometric test to find out how the class perceived itself in terms of social interaction. After explaining the procedure to the class each child was asked "With whom would you like to play?" I did not feel that sufficient rapport existed between me and the pupils to ask for their rejections.

Play teams were developed from the results of the sociometric test. This procedure was very effective and greatly cut down the number of arguments and fights which usually occurred at game time. The improved spirit of co-operation even carried over into games which were competitive.

In the following example, the major objectives in using socio-metrics were to determine cabin mates for an outdoor education camping trip and to improve the relationships of several highly rejected pupils. Three classes of fifth and sixth grade children in the same school were going on an outdoor education trip. During the school year it was obvious that several children in the sixth grade class were highly rejected by their peers. A number of sociometric studies were made before going to camp to determine the degree of rejection and to indicate areas of acceptance.

The camping trip provided an opportunity to regroup the classes into smaller living groups. All of the children were brought into one classroom and asked: "Whom would you like as a cabin mate?" They were asked to name three persons.

On the basis of these data the children were grouped according to their choices. Special care was given to those who were highly rejected so that they would be placed in groups that indicated the least hostility toward them.

The three most highly rejected were then assigned "prestige" jobs to perform: Building the camp fire, assisting the lifeguards, teaching other pupils how to use the steam sterilizer for the trays, and so forth. In carrying on these assignments the pupils displayed certain skills that they had never displayed in classroom activities. Some of these were blowing the camp bugle, helping other pupils in the cook-out, and helping the cleaning details.

Subsequent sociometric studies showed that upon return to the classroom the rejected children were more accepted and accepting than had been true prior to the camping experience.

In each of these activities reported, the objectives for the subdivision of the group were carefully worked out before regrouping was attempted. This is essential. (The child reflects his feelings of need through his choices.) The use of sociometry as a tool in developing comfortable learning situations tends to reduce behavior problems and to redirect individuals toward better relationships. Sociometric grouping provides for individual differences in learning, at least to the extent that the individual has some choice in the development of his own working environment. It is not suggested that sociometric techniques be used without regard for other grouping devices, but that they be used as effective devices in appropriate situations.

USING DIFFERENCES TO ADVANTAGE

Schools and classrooms need to take into account all the kinds of learnings which children enjoy as a result of the way they are grouped. Learning is multiple: concepts, skills, and attitudes may be separated for purposes of discussion, but they are learned simultaneously. When we group children for one purpose, we must ask ourselves, "What other learnings than those we anticipate must be taken into consideration?"

The need for planned groups is created by the nature of our society, the way in which our society functions, and the needs of individuals. The impersonality of living has increased, and there has been an increase in the need for school experiences which provide meaning for many aspects of learning experiences which formerly could be had in the neighborhood or community. Heterogeneity is a fact of American life; the many subcultures held together by a common core of experiences create a culture which is often described as "unity within diversity." The very nature of the society makes it imperative that people with diverse abilities, skills, and capacities work together harmoniously on common enterprises.

Children need opportunities to work with others in an atmosphere in which differences are respected and valued. In situations of this kind they learn to value and respect differences. This fact is made apparent by a third grade child's enthusiastic "I like to work with him. He has such good ideas, and we can work ideas out together."

Teachers are in the best possible position to assess and use individual differences in planning groups to work together in the classroom. Diversity of skill and needs of children can be used to plan groups so that they complement and enrich one another. Two examples of grouping follow.

GROUPING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

The second grade wanted to find how things we need were made. As a first step the entire class made the following list of ways they could get information they needed:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Going to factories | 4. Asking people |
| 2. Reading books | 5. Looking at pictures |
| 3. Making things | 6. Talking things over |

After this list was completed the children decided they wanted to know how bread, upholstered furniture, and rugs were produced. As they were discussing how they would go about their study, the children made the following decisions:

Some things all of us can do, like making the rug and going on field trips, but if we all try to work on one small chair we'll sure get mixed up. So maybe we'd better have small committees for some work and big ones for other jobs.

This decision led to the organization of small groups for certain activities. The total group was to work on certain activities. A few of the groups stayed together throughout the study; others changed frequently according to the job that was done.

At first so-called permanent groups were organized to make pillows, an upholstered chair, and a rug. The membership of these groups were determined on the basis of the children's choice—(1) each child indicated a first and second choice regarding activities of particular interest to them; (2) the children's range of ability—children who were at varying stages of intellectual, social, and physical development were included in each group; and (3) sociometric data—children who were unchosen or little chosen on sociograms and those rejected on a seating sociogram were included in each group.

Temporary groups were formed to bake bread and other bakery products, to grind wheat, and to make murals, dioramas, and other visual records of information gained.

The wheat-grinding group, which was composed of two children, changed often since all the children wanted the ex-

perience. Even the children who were timid and sometimes rejected enjoyed the activity and got to feel the satisfaction that goes with getting something accomplished. Relatively few problems arose because of the nature of the task. The values of this activity may be summarized as follows: First, the activity provided opportunity for favorable interaction and therefore, brought out new and amicable facets of each child's personality; secondly, it provided opportunity for each child to gain acceptance. Finally, the experience enabled children to learn to work successfully with others who were not necessarily friends and even those for whom they had no special liking.

There was to be a group to make bakery products each week. The membership of this group included children from two or three of the subgroups indicated by a sociogram and also a couple of children who were accepted in each of the subgroups. This grouping was planned to further interaction of all members of the class, for it brought subgroups into communication with each other. The mural groups were planned to enable children to share leadership roles and to learn how to work co-operatively in various situations. Several children who worked in this group were the more aggressive members of the group that was working on the rug. The children in each of the groups had a wide range of creative abilities. The groups stayed together until the mural was completed.

While the more aggressive members of the rug group were working with the two mural groups, the less aggressive and passive children in the rug group were enjoying an opportunity to assert themselves by assuming leadership and letting their ideas be known. When the children in the mural groups returned to the rug group they found that the children who had stayed in the rug group knew what they were doing and were ready to tell others how to do the required work. In fact, the former leaders of the rug group had to become followers.

As members from the other groups completed the tasks they had undertaken, they joined the rug group, the members of which toward the close of the unit included everyone in the

class. As the group increased in size, leadership and follower-ship passed among the members.

Making bread was one of the final experiences of the chil-dren. Their recipe was for two loaves, but they needed to make four loaves. The problem was solved by the children dividing into two groups and each group making two loaves.

GROUPING FOR ROLE PLAYING

A second-grade class was beginning to have the usual diffi-culties of seven- and eight-year-olds, especially in their social relations. All were becoming increasingly inclined to appraise others and also increasingly aware that they were being appraised by their peers. Quick to do battle or cry, to huddle together or ban against, to reject or be rejected, to withdraw or to attack, they were becoming self-conscious and sensitive. They needed help in developing new skills in handling peer group problems and in using the skills they already possessed.

Varied techniques were necessary to help the children meet these needs. Role playing was one of the techniques used. The children acted out interpersonal problems derived from their own experience and also presented possible solutions.

In working out the groups for the role playing, many fac-tors were taken into consideration. From sociometric data the teacher was able to derive the status levels in the class. From personal observations and conversations with the children, the teacher was able to derive some of the reasons and the personality factors determining the status levels. From anecdotal rec-ords, the most frequently recurrent friendship problems became apparent and the habit patterns formed in meeting them. There-fore, the group configurations were devised on the basis of the status and personality factors. The information provided from the anecdotal records pointed out the first two most immediate problem-solving situations to be acted out. The questions pre-sented for the first role playing situation were: "Can you think of a time when you thought of a way to make up with an old

friend—and it worked?" and "Can you think of a time when you thought up a way to make a new friend—and it worked?"

As the children began to respond, they were asked if they could show what happened. Being seven and better at showing than at verbalizing, they were only too eager to do this. As a child stated a situation, he was asked how many children were needed to act it out. The stipulation was made that the teacher would choose the children with whom they were to work.

The following examples show how the teacher used the available information as a basis for forming the group in each situation:

Ed's status in the group was on the downgrade according to the sociometric chart. Through observation, conferences, and anecdotal records, it was obvious that Ed's mistaken idea of being masculine was never to "give in" or compromise; never to accept another person's idea. This, to him, was defeat. He would withdraw from a game, if crossed, and then look lonesomely on. Therefore, when John, whose sociometric standing in the class is continually secure, who is considered a "real boy" by the children, who is a friendly and accepting boy, wanted to show a situation in which he made up with an old friend, the teacher accordingly grouped him with Ed. Since they needed one more boy, a child was chosen who, quietly steady and self assured but not withdrawn, could act as a catalytic agent within this configuration.

Sally leaned on her "best friend," the only child with whom she had any interaction in the class, and theirs was indeed a stormy friendship. According to the sociogram, Sally was neither rejected nor accepted by the other children. She simply wasn't recognized. Watching Sally and chatting with her, the teacher realized that she really wanted to form other friendships but simply didn't know how to go about it. So, when Lila, a friendly, easy and well-liked girl in the group said that she needed one other girl to help show how she once met a new

friend, she was grouped with Sally. There were several reasons for this. First, it would give Sally practice in this technique. Secondly, it would give her recognition from the class to be grouped with Lila. Thirdly, it would help Lila support Sally, an important learning both for Sally and for Lila.

Sally's "best friend" Betty, however, had other problems. The children actually did reject her on the sociogram and in their playtime. They said she was "too busy," "thinks she's so smart." Observing and conferring with Betty, the teacher realized that she found it difficult to relate to children as a child herself. She had developed many skills in relating to grown-ups and expected to relate to the children as a grown-up. She was high powered, bright, and needed to learn what children liked about other children and what they didn't like. Accordingly, she needed a strong and dynamic group with whom to work. Therefore, she was grouped with one child who had high academic prestige in the class and considerable social acceptance and with a child whose sociometric position fluctuated in the group but whose intelligence, verbalism, and imagination were recognized as an attribute by the children and who, therefore, was highly enjoyed in any situation involving role playing.

The last example was that of Boyd. He was new to the group, young, a little anxious, and finding it difficult to make new friends. His social techniques were primarily destructive. His attempt at entree into the group usually consisted of things like breaking up ball games. The sociometric chart showed numerous rejections of him by other children. Other sources of information, records and observations, showed that this child didn't have the know-how to make friends, and he was snowballing himself into the fringe. In grouping him for role playing the teacher put him with a child who was reasonably accepted by the class now, but, who, when he arrived in the class early in the year, went through many of the same difficulties that Boyd was presently facing.

These examples show the general approach, sources of information, and criteria used by a teacher in determining how to group the children for role playing.

As might be expected, the results were neither immediate nor miraculous. However, several months of role playing apparently helped the children in their social interaction.

Sociometrically, more interaction, fewer rejections, and a shift of status toward a mean were found. The class climate of the classroom softened considerably, and there were days when during the play periods as much as half of the class worked in subgroups. Ignored children began to gain recognition, rejected children a degree of acceptance.

And, finally there was that periodic gem of a day when an argument occurs and the children handle it in a way they would not have handled it several months ago. A shiny face looks up glistening with discovery. "Why, that's just like our play acting."

It is apparent from these examples that one of the primary goals the teacher had in mind in planning the groups was to provide opportunities for the children to gain a feeling of self-acceptance and of being adequate and growing persons. Being able to accept and appreciate the capabilities of others is closely related to one's feelings about one's self. Finding such acceptance and appreciation is too important to be left to the whims of chance. Planned groups can vastly improve the possibilities for children to gain mutual respect and rapport.

GROUPING IS A SOMETIME THING

Temporary grouping may be used to advantage in various phases of the program of instruction. It is commonly used when pupils in the class have a special need or when the class is divided because of interests.

The following description of the use of temporary groups in providing instruction in arithmetic illustrates how such grouping may be used in providing instruction.

The pupils work in one of two or three groups, depending upon their level of achievement and their needs. However, as special needs for help come to light, other groups are formed for the purpose of providing the help that is required to meet these needs.

If there is a special need for help in carrying, the teacher may ask a question such as, "Who would like to work with me on carrying?" What will the learner feel and do if he does need help? To put up his hand and say, "Yes, I'd like to be in that group today," has so many ramifications. Yet, if a sense of trust exists in a class, a teacher can ask such questions and children can afford to join temporary groups on the basis of feeling a need.

Naturally, this type of grouping and supplementary teaching is not expected to solve all learning problems. It does provide one way of approaching problems that are caused by confusion on the children's part. It gives the teacher an added check on her evaluation of needs. It provides a different learning structure which encourages children who at times benefit greatly from being in a group of their choice.

One eight-year-old child continued to have difficulty telling time. Finally in a help-by-choice group this little girl said, "I know the little hand is the hour hand but I keep forgetting. The big hand *should* be the hour hand 'cause an hour is lots

bigger than a minute." Once she spoke, I found her reasoning impeccable and her difficulty completely understandable. It has been impossible for me to get to the root of the trouble before because in her arithmetic skill group she spoke only when called upon and then gave one word answers. Once we located the source of her confusion in the temporary help-by-choice group where she was making an effort to get straightened out, this problem was solved.

Another sort of temporary grouping is based upon specific interests rather than specific needs to gain skill.

In most elementary classrooms the "Sharing" or "News Time" usually involves the class as a whole. However, there are times when 34 pupils sitting in a circle do not constitute a working group. There are times and reasons for organizing smaller temporary subgroups. Such a time may be during the World Series.

Even with eight-year-olds there seems to be a tight little knot of boys who eat, drink, and sleep baseball. If regular procedures are followed, these boys can easily monopolize the sharing time for a week to such an extent that no one else can get a word in edgewise. So when the baseball buzz begins and certain disinterested girls begin wriggling and certain boys start to review the contents of their pockets, a different setup for sharing time may be in order.

A quick survey of the current interests of the class may be made by simply asking the class to suggest topics for discussion. In two or three minutes the teacher can have the information sought and be ready to organize the pupils into groups like this: "Over by the window, all those who want to talk about the Series. Robert, will you please be chairman today? In the corner by the door, all those who want to discuss ice skating. Irene, please be chairman. Anyone who does not want to join one of those two groups today come over in this corner with me."

Although the regular sharing time may be the primary basis for building certain skills of discussion, developing a feeling of the group-as-a-whole and providing a good start for the school

day, flexible, temporary grouping to meet immediate needs and interests can provide additional opportunities and values. For example, it gives more children chances to be fully active in the discussion. It makes it possible for more children to be chairman and to take other roles in a discussion group. It gives children opportunities to see themselves and other children in a new situation or a new light. As children talk in a small group about a subject of mutual and intense interest, the shy quiet one may prove to be a hidden fount of information. The girls may display a set of values and interests labelled "no boys allowed" which are completely hidden in a larger mixed group.

While the children are sharing, the teacher can use the time in a variety of ways. If all children have found an interest group, the teacher may find it most valuable to move about studying the children in these new situations. He may take notes and ponder on ways to help individuals to become more effective or he may note needs of the class as a whole. This evaluation can be followed by problem solving lessons such as "What can a chairman or recorder do when everyone starts talking at once?"

One valuable way for the teacher to spend his time is to work with those children who do not readily join interest groups. It often seems that the child who does not participate in this type of discussion actually does not know what he is interested in or even what he likes to do. Talking casually with a friendly teacher and a small group of children can sometimes be the first step on that long road away from loneliness.

Another value of this sort of flexible grouping is that it does not take any extra teacher time and preparation. It merely means keeping eyes and ears and hearts open to the tone of voice that says, "Today is today and it will never come again and if I can't hit the winning homer for the Giants, the least I can do is to sit here and pray for them." It means knowing which children can and want to have turns to be chairman and assume extra responsibility for keeping their group going. And

it means the delight of getting in on some of the talk that is ordinarily hoarded for recess behind the ball shack.

Throughout these examples of temporary grouping runs a single strand—a choice on the part of the learner. Choice is certainly only one basis for group organization. However, the opportunity to make a choice may be the key to opening doors that have remained tightly locked inside the child. Temporary grouping with a choice somehow allows the child to come to the learning situation and bring his eagerness and faith with him.

THE ADMINISTRATOR LOOKS AT GROUPING

For well over half a century it has been common practice for the elementary school administrator to put children of like age at each grade level in the same classrooms. He has thus established groups that were homogeneous in chronological age. Yet the fact remains that the intellectual ability of those in the groups ranged from very low to very high. As the administrator looks at the results of achievement tests for the previous year, he sees this span of ability reflected. For example, the third grade pupils' achievement in arithmetic ranged from first through fifth grade. The same was true of spelling. The picture is repeated for reading and all other subjects. The range for each subject is several grades wide and pupils commonly appear at different points in the range for the various subjects.

The administrator is informed regarding the wide diversity of experience and family background that have shaped the lives and personalities represented. He knows that all the differences in pupils' achievement and personality must be known and understood by the teacher to whom he assigns each group. He has a sincere desire to help all the teachers in the school improve the instructional program. He recalls a lead editorial in a recent newspaper demanding an end to lackadaisical practices in schools, a tougher program in mathematics and science, and a general re-emphasis on the fundamentals. It was clear to him that the editor viewed the school as an elimination contest with a program geared to those who could succeed on a superior academic level. He recalls that this "get tough" spirit had support in other newspaper articles in recent months. Demands have been made for classes for the gifted and many other forms of ability grouping. It has occurred to him that his administrator colleagues, who use ability grouping, seem to like the clear-cut neatness of dividing a class according to what they call "objective criteria."

As the administrator faces each new school year he must plan ways of meeting all the problems involved in providing good instruction for all pupils. In making this provision he must take into consideration all the facts.

For one thing, he should realize that even if he could somehow miraculously set up a truly homogeneous group in terms of ability to start the year, he would find himself hard pressed to keep it that way because of the never-ending line of coming-and-going pupils moving about the state. The 1955 census revealed that 27.8 per cent of Californians move from one home to another each year, and the per cent is increasing. Every week between one and 15 newcomers enroll in his school. In order to follow through on ability grouping, it would be necessary for him to have available at least a monthly testing program. Otherwise, so many newcomers would be improperly placed that by the end of the year the ability range in each socalled homogeneous group would be nearly as great as in an unselected group.

In teaching there are many times when it is desirable to have a group of children somewhat homogeneous in particular characteristics. Trying to bring this about by sectioning groups according to ability has not worked. The heterogeneous classroom with flexible grouping dictated by the needs of changing situations more nearly approaches a desirable solution. As detailed elsewhere in this issue of the *Journal*, teachers can find ways of providing homogeneity within class groups and still have all the advantages of heterogeneity.

The question still remains, however, "How can the principal help teachers improve the instructional program as he organizes classroom groups?" To that end, the principal can make two kinds of plans. First, he can plan to achieve a desirably balanced heterogeneity. A hit-and-miss or alphabetical sectioning of pupils will often result in great imbalance from one section to another. For example, too great a majority of one sex, a preponderance of minority background children in one class, a collection of problem children in another are some undesirable

outcomes of a mechanical approach to making class assignments. If the principal plans deliberately for heterogeneity, he can balance the boy-girl ratio; he can place minority background pupils in each class. The instructional program of any teacher assigned three pupils who cause a discipline "whirlwind" cannot be improved unless something can be done about the "whirlwind." The principal can help instructional situations by placing children with problems where they will be most likely to succeed.

The second task of the principal lies in the quality of his supervision. He must find ways to increase the ability of teachers to think about children in a gamut of variables, only one of which is intellectual ability. Helping teachers to recognize other variables should be a prime administrative responsibility. Respect for individual differences is an attitude or an atmosphere which pervades the entire school and probably will not be present unless it first exists in the principal. He must be completely ready to respect the professional integrity of each teacher, to permit each one to be different. He will look at teaching competence as a matter of degree, not definition, and believe that each teacher can become competent to a higher degree by the right kind of planning, help, and guidance on his part. In short, he must willingly permit his faculty to be heterogeneous.

In the example that follows, one elementary school principal shows how he puts some of these ideas into practice by planning classroom groups. He thinks of his work as a preventive approach to discipline through a challenging environment for learning.

Do current pressures need to force us into poor practice? One principal in a Bay Area school district believes that we cannot wait for problems to develop and then look for solutions. Pressures and problems must be approached with a preventive eye in order to insure a successful program.

The school population in his district includes 700 children from kindergarten through grade six. They are housed in two

buildings, one of which is a primary unit. The staff includes 23 classroom teachers, a secretary in each building, and four specialists who provide part-time services. These specialists are a school nurse, a school psychologist, the curriculum co-ordinator of the district, and a curriculum assistant whose work at present centers in developing a science program and in offering special work for a small number of children who have problems that cause them to need special help, and for one group of 18 gifted children from the fifth and sixth grades. There are three elementary schools in the district. The area is described as suburban with most of the families fitting into a socio-economic description from lower class through upper-middle class with the majority at the lower end of the scale. Mobility is an important factor in school planning and moves cluster around two seasons, Christmas and summer vacation.

The school runs smoothly and efficiently but what is most noticeable is the over-all atmosphere of people of all ages working together for a purpose. The administrator of the school points out that the academic goals of the schools are clearly stated in the law and that these goals can be achieved if the total adjustment of each learner is carefully considered and fostered. His philosophy is clear cut and basic to the practices carried on in the school. Certain of his ideas follow:

1. At all times, children should be constructively occupied in doing things in which they are interested. The school has an upper-grade program of team games carried on at recess and noon. Children join and are placed in team groups so as to maximize co-operation and friendliness as well as interest and fair play.
2. Children need clearly defined standards that challenge them and close friendly relations with each other and with adults in order to achieve their highest potential. At the school these standards are clearly defined. They are broad general standards such as "Play safely in the yard" and "Be responsible for your own behavior." Specific rules are avoided because setting up a multitude of

specific rules only means that rules will be broken. Broad standards encourage responsible behavior and minimize problems; they also allow behavior to be evaluated on an individual basis. Some individuals can behave more responsibly than others. The broad standard allows appropriate problem solving that promotes growth. The school council tackles problems and plans constructive activities that help keep problems at a minimum.

3. Working together to solve problems and to promote individual growth is the accepted practice rather than adults working on children to produce conformity. When new activities are started, children selected to organize the activity are those who will set up a challenging level of achievement. As other children are drawn in, they are motivated and helped to work at their highest capacity both in the ways they work and in what they do.
4. Children need an environment conducive to learning. The school plant and materials are organized so that they may be most effectively used by children and teacher. The school atmosphere is considered a most important part of the environment. Here working together with high standards seems to be the key to effective outcomes. High standards are set and expected of the personnel.

One of the important practices displayed by the school to further its philosophy seems to be the way in which the classroom groups are planned and reorganized each year. The administrator and teachers believe that it is important for the children to have opportunities to build many friendships in school and for the school to develop an esprit de corps as a total unit. They feel that putting children into classroom groups at random and keeping them there through seven years of elementary school does not provide either the most desirable nor the maximum amounts of learning for the children. In their opinion such practice sets up rigid status and structure lines that tend toward isolation of classes rather than building whole school co-operation.

Classroom groups are planned during the spring of each school year. The plan starts with the classroom teacher who divides his class into equally balanced sections. If for example, there are three second-grade classes, each teacher of the second grade divides the class into three sections. If there are four second-grade classes, four sections are planned. In balancing each group the teacher selects children of varying I.Q.'s, children with varying degrees of reading ability, and uses his judgment in balancing the sections in other factors such as leadership ability and social adjustment.

Once these sections are set up on paper, teachers of the same grade level meet to form the new classroom groups by putting sections from different classrooms together. The new class list is formed and together these teachers look at the groups in terms of individual combinations of children. They arrange so that each child has at least one friend in his class. They study how to handle problems of children who seem to interfere with each other for any reason when they are working in the same group. The teachers strive to form groups that are relatively equal in terms of heterogeneity of skills, abilities, and temperaments. They plan so that no class is overloaded with problems.

After the teachers have finished balancing the groups, the principal and psychologist study the groups with a special view to placing children with teachers in groups in which the individual child is likely to work most nearly to his capacity. The psychologist has a rather extensive knowledge of each pupil. Although each individual class seldom has more than two or three children who might be described as discipline problems, the psychologist carries a guidance load of from 150 to 200 children in this school. This list includes children who have been given individual tests, had conference help in solving problems, or who are being studied for any of a wide variety of reasons to foster their development. Again a preventive rather than a remedial philosophy is put into practice.

When children have been in the school for several years, each fourth grade pupil, for example, is likely to know nearly

all of the other fourth grade children in the school and a number of children from other grades. One committee of the School Council serves as hosts and hostesses to see that new children get acquainted not only with the grounds and facilities but with the school personnel and perhaps most importantly helps them to make friends with the children.

The wide range of familiarity with the school and its members does not just happen automatically. Studies show that in many schools, children do not even know the names of their classmates, much less those of children in the other classes. The principal of this school is convinced that planned groups and a challenging positive philosophy can produce a situation where boys and girls will learn most effectively.

IDEAS ABOUT GROUPING

Out of this study of problems of grouping has grown a number of ideas—ideas that the authors believe to be sound and that provide leads to solving practical problems. Those who are about to tackle an educational problem where grouping might contribute to an effective solution should find valuable the ideas that follow:

1. Some form or forms of grouping are necessary in setting up classroom groups and in planning learning experiences within the classroom.
2. Grouping is one of the basic ways of providing for individual differences.
3. No one right or wrong way of grouping has been established by research. Grouping is one approach to solving problems. Most problems have a number of possible solutions. Therefore, the manner of grouping selected should contribute as directly as possible to a desirable solution of the problem. Any way of grouping has its strengths and its limitations. These are partially inherent in the method and vary according to the situation.
4. No standard or ideal number of children per group and no ideal arbitrary number of groups per class has been determined.
5. Flexibility is a keynote to grouping. Groups should change in composition and purpose as children and situations change. Children should be able to change groups and helped to do so.
6. Using any one method of grouping exclusively is unwise as this restricts the effectiveness of solving specific problems through grouping, sets up a system of values that does not provide maximum development for all learners,

- and in general fails to take advantage of group and individual motivation.
7. Grouping needs to be based on thorough understanding of individuals. Parents have contributions to make through their insight.
 8. In a democratic society, differences are to be valued and used. We must learn how to use differences so that each person in any school group can make his maximum contribution and learn to the full extent of his potential.
 9. Children need to be in some groups long enough to gain a feeling of belonging and worth. They need opportunities to vary their roles and positions within a group—to work and play in groups of various kinds.
 10. An aggregate of persons is not a group. The school should create real groups—children working together because they have and feel a common need or goal. "To put 35 people in a room and give each a book does not produce a group."
 11. Group processes should be used only when they are needed.
 12. Groups should serve a purpose; and in setting up and using grouping, care must be taken to make sure that no one gets hurt. The over-all welfare of individuals and the group should be considered.
 13. Grouping must be realistic in terms of time, space, numbers, the children, and the teacher's ability to handle group processes.
 14. Value judgments about groups and individuals within groups should be avoided. The names of groups should not imply status. Peer leaders' names to designate the group may sometimes be useful.
 15. Research does not yet provide much conclusive evidence about grouping.
 16. It is wise to have children take part in choosing some of their own groups. This is one way to capitalize on their motivations.

17. Group size needs to be varied to suit purpose. The whole class may be a group satisfactory for certain purposes.
18. The purposes and functions of groups can become more complex as children and teachers increase their ability to work in groups.
19. Children can and should learn techniques of forming and working in groups. This can best be done through direct experience accompanied by direct study of techniques and roles.
20. Grouping makes it possible to cover a wide range and a greater detail of content.
21. Participation can be frequent and deep in small groups.
22. Grouping allows effective organization for meeting specific purposes—such as encouraging a small group of children to advance at a rapid rate.
23. Grouping helps children learn from each other—things teachers sometimes cannot teach them. Grouping allows use of peer motivation.
24. Discipline problems are often reduced when children have more chance to participate, and their needs are more fully met in groups.
25. Independent activities need to be carefully planned to aid and supplement work in or with groups.
26. Children need to learn to identify with increasingly larger groups—the class, the school, the community. Grouping within the school and the classroom should facilitate this process.
27. Grouping and group activities can and should provide realistic and effective experiences in learning democratic behaviors.
28. Grouping is so complex a process that no mechanical technique or device should be allowed to override thoughtful teacher judgment.

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

It is all very well to read about the problems the schools are facing today. It is wise to follow the research and to read examples of what other people are doing to solve the problems of teaching and learning. But where does this leave the individual educator who must face each day the complex problems of organizing and managing a school program? What shall be done about grouping pupils for effective learning?

Since there aren't any ready answers to the problems posed by these questions, school people must put forth full effort to learn how to use grouping effectively. They cannot wait for someone else to do the job. Each one must determine the ways of grouping that will work best with the children for whom he is responsible.

Perhaps reading the material in this issue of the *Journal* has provided the incentive to take a fresh look at the program of grouping in your school. Taking this look is one contribution to the program of education that everyone can make; sharing ideas with other educators is another. Discussing the problem of grouping with friends and associates is another. An article in which you describe what is happening in your classroom or school program that you submit to a professional journal for publication is a contribution that you may make.

SELECTED REFERENCES ON GROUPING

Using Differences to Advantage

Cunningham, Ruth. *Understanding Group Behavior of Boys and Girls.* New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951.

Jennings, Helen Hall. *Leadership and Isolation: A Study of Personality in Interpersonal Relations.* New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1950.

Miel, Alice. *Co-operative Procedures in Learning.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952.

Moreno, Jacob L. *Foundations of Sociometry, Group Psychotherapy, and Sociodrama.* New York: Beacon House, 1953.

Rasey, Marie. *What We Learn From Children.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1956.

Shaftel, George, and Fannie R. *Playing the Problem Story: An Approach to Human Relations in the Classroom.* Inter-group Education Pamphlet. New York: National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1952.

Shaftel, Fannie R. "Role Playing in Teaching American Ideals." (One of the studies of the Americanization Project Series). Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Stanford, California: Stanford University, August, 1948.

Tragner, Helen G., and Yarrow, Marion Radke. *They Learn What They Live.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1952.

Sociometry

Botner, Taft B. "Sociometric Approach to Group Study." *The National Elementary Principal.* XXXIV (February, 1955), 32-34.

DeLong, Arthur R. "Values and Dangers of the Sociogram." *Understanding the Child.* XXVI (January, 1957), 24-28.

Dineen, Mary Ann, and Ralph Garry. "Effect of Sociometric Seating on Classroom Cleavage." *The Elementary School Journal.* LVI (April, 1956), 358-62.

Teaching the Skills

Floyd, Cecil. "Meeting Children's Reading Needs in the Middle Grades; a Preliminary Report." *The Elementary School Journal,* LV (October, 1954), 99-103.

Fox, Lorene K. "Individualized Reading." *N.E.A. Journal.* XLIII (March, 1958), 162.

McCullough, Constance M. "What Does Research Reveal About Practices in Teaching Reading?" *The English Journal.* XLVI (November, 1957), 475-90.

Sacramento State College Council International Reading Association. *Meeting Individual Needs Through Reading.* Third Annual Reading Conference Proceedings. Vol. I, 1958.



ADVISORY BOARD, 1958-59

- BUD R. ALLEN, Teacher, Seventh Grade, Colton Intermediate School
LARS BARSTAD, President, California School Supervisors Association, Fresno
MRS. THELMA BEARDSLEY, Consultant in Elementary Education, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, San Bernardino County
MRS. VERA BRAHAM, Principal, Cypress Elementary School, Highland
JOHN CAFFREY, Director of Research, Palo Alto City Unified School District
GRACE CONZETT, Consultant in Elementary Education, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, Los Angeles County
MRS. JEAN DEMATTOS, Principal, Tahoe Elementary School, Sacramento, and President, California Association for Childhood Education
ROBERT G. FISK, Associate Professor of Education, Chico State College
MILDRED FOLMAR, Curriculum Consultant, Ontario Elementary School District
WESLEY GORDON, Curriculum Consultant, San Lorenzo Elementary School District
DEFOREST S. HAMILTON, County Superintendent of Schools, Sonoma County
CHARLES HOFFMAN, Teacher, Seventh Grade, Running Springs Elementary School, Rim of the World Unified School District, Lake Arrowhead
CHARLES F. KENNEY, Superintendent of Schools, Mt. Eden Elementary School District
RUDOLPH S. KUPFER, Director of Research, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, Kern County
DONALD McNASSOR, Professor of Education, Claremont Graduate School
MRS. JOSEPHINE McSPADDEN, Teacher, Seventh Grade, Sylvan Union School, Stanislaus County
PEROT NEVIN, Principal, Alpha Lyman School, Bloomington
ROBERT POKORNY, Superintendent of Schools, Vaca Valley Union Elementary School District
HERDON CARROLL RAY, Superintendent of Schools, Ceres Elementary School District
ARLENE A. ROSTER, Associate Professor of Education, Long Beach State College
MRS. J. FRANK SNOWDEN, President, California Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc., Los Angeles
MRS. MABEL B. SMAILES, Superintendent of Schools, El Tejon Union Elementary School District, Kern County
BERNARD WATSON, Principal, Schallenberger Elementary School, San Jose, and President, California Elementary School Administrators Association
MRS. EDITH WEST, General Supervisor, San Pablo Elementary School District
MRS. LORRAINE W. WEST, Assistant Professor of Education, Fresno State College
MRS. MARGERY YATES, Curriculum Consultant, Jefferson Elementary School District, Daly City

